United Nations A/53/PV.49

General Assembly

Official Records

Fifty-third Session

49th plenary meeting
Thursday, 29 October 1998, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Opertti ..... (Uruguay)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Semakula Kiwanuka (Uganda), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 35

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/419)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Burkina Faso, who will speak on behalf of the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Kafando (Burkina Faso) (*interpretation from French*): In his statement to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly last September, the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) stated,

> "In their struggle and daily efforts to emerge from underdevelopment, African Governments and peoples are not alone. They know how to rely on the sincere support of their friends. This includes the operational development system of the United Nations, which I should like to commend for its dedication to the uplifting struggle against poverty and other forms of deprivation that afflict African peoples." *(A/53/PV.7, p. 18)*

Today — at the exact moment when we are being called upon to consider the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity — that statement is particularly significant. Given their very noble ideal of safeguarding peace, these two institutions cannot be opposed to each other but rather must complement each other. Without being ostentatious, the current cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity nonetheless sets a high standard. At the outset, however, these organizations' relations consisted only of the existence in Addis Ababa of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), which was followed by the establishment in New York of an observer mission of the Organization of African Unity to the United Nations.

As the first element of this cooperation, the ECA has done useful work, particularly in carrying out programmes in the area of transportation and telecommunications during the United Nations Decade for Transport and Communications in Africa, as well as in the areas of science and technology, trade, small- and medium-sized businesses and so forth. For example, the ECA contributed to the elaboration of the Lagos Plan of Action, a genuine distillation of Africa's strategy for endogenous and self-reliant development.

I should also highlight the very effective work done by the United Nations Development Programme through its African offices, as well as the work of the specialized agencies, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations

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Children's Fund, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization and the World Food Programme. Nor should I overlook the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Environment Programme, the United Nations Information Centres, the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and, of course, the Bretton Woods institutions.

Nowadays, we are witnessing a true institutionalization of relations between the two organizations in the form of periodic meetings and consultations between the two Secretaries-General, exchanges of information, coordination of actions and cooperation programmes.

In terms of institutional relations, the only blemish remaining is the restrictiveness of the symbolic status of the OAU observer mission here in New York, and we thus call for an expansion of its rights to enable it to do its job properly. However commendable and tangible it may be, this cooperation still needs to be strengthened in view of the immense challenges facing today's world. The United Nations could, for example, step up its cooperation by taking into consideration the priorities set by the OAU's thirty-fourth summit.

In the area of peacekeeping, the current Chairman of the OAU appealed to the United Nations

> "to contribute not only to strengthening structurally the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa, but also to provide technical and logistical support, since in the end we share the same ideal: assuring for our world the security and peace essential to its development and flourishing". (ibid.)

Given this perspective, a United Nations contribution to the OAU Peace Fund, which was created in March 1993 primarily to consolidate the efforts of preventive diplomacy, would certainly be greatly appreciated. There is no need to spell out the fact that financial and logistical management of crises is a tremendous burden for our weak economies. Still in the same sphere, it would be desirable for the United Nations Secretary-General to send a representative to all African meetings dealing with conflict settlement. Such an approach would make it possible to understand better, at first hand and in greater depth, the issues involved in certain African decisions. I note as a very timely move that the current Chairman of the OAU invited the United Nations Secretary-General or his representative to participate in the next meeting on the dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, scheduled for Ouagadougou on 7 and 8 November next.

Clearly, Africa, which is caught up in the problems of globalization and the world economic crisis, relies a great deal on cooperation with the United Nations operational system in order to secure its own development.

But what can we expect from the United Nations? In terms of cooperation in the area of economic development *stricto sensu*, it would be tedious to go back over what Africa can expect from the United Nations in terms of resource mobilization, debt alleviation or debt forgiveness — all these things have been extensively discussed in the context of the consideration of the Secretary-General's report on the situation in Africa and in the debate on the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s.

The new approach that I am proposing is rather to determine what kind of assistance the United Nations can give in the area of development strategy and methodology. The suggestions that come to mind are as follows.

First of all, the United Nations should readjust its approach vis-à-vis Africa — that is, as far as possible, it should avoid a superficial approach to helping us, but rather should use genuine substantive analysis and take into account our specific realities. In this regard, I note that the Secretary-General recently organized a high-level meeting of mostly African leaders to study his report on the situation in Africa. Doubtless, the conclusions yielded by that meeting, together with the proposals made in the General Assembly, will be crucial in identifying solutions to the problems of debt, rationalizing human resources, mobilization of financial resources and so forth. This kind of initiative deserves to be encouraged.

Hence, thanks to its specialized institutions, the United Nations should be able to help Africa take into account the cultural dimension of its development, since development for African society implies the ability to assimilate innovations and changes, as we have seen in the case of Asian countries. This last requirement also presupposes support for the efforts of the OAU to promote human resources development because the centre of all development is the human being.

Through its vast experience and its capable staff, the United Nations can help African countries institute a political and legal environment conducive to development. By setting up measures that will encourage disarmament, it can help the countries of Africa redirect certain military expenditures to the needs of development.

In the immediate future, however, the tangible cooperation that the OAU keenly awaits from the United Nations is willing and massive support for the holding of the economic summit of 1999. The Secretary-General is already committed to this undertaking. There can be no doubt that that highly important meeting will further consolidate and strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, to the greater benefit of the peoples of Africa and of humankind as a whole.

Mr. Sucharipa (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. In addition, the Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated country, Cyprus, align themselves with this statement.

First of all, the European Union would like to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the report submitted under the agenda item we are now considering. Together with the landmark document on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, which we had the occasion to discuss two weeks ago, this report underlines the importance of close cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

The European Union welcomes the ongoing dialogue between the United Nations and the OAU aimed at building closer ties in order to enhance their mutual capacity for preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa and for coordinating their efforts in that regard, in particular through the meetings of the two Secretaries-General and their senior advisers in Addis Ababa and in New York earlier this year.

Over the last year the number of violent conflicts in Africa has increased, and some of them show alarming signs of deterioration. Grave breaches of humanitarian law and human rights, the plight of refugees, ethnic hatred and arms-trafficking remain among the key problems of regional and international concern. While stressing the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, the European Union considers it essential that African countries and regional organizations play a leading role in conflict prevention and resolution in Africa.

We welcome the adoption of Security Council resolution 1197 (1998), which aims at supporting regional initiatives in Africa, as well as enhancing coordination between the United Nations and the OAU in the field of conflict prevention and the maintenance of peace. We hope that the expeditious implementation of the many aspects contained in that resolution will contribute to further strengthening the ties between the two organizations. We also welcome the statement of the Security Council President on 16 September this year (S/PRST/1998/28), in which the Council expressed its commitment to exercising its responsibility in relation to Africa and reaffirmed, *inter alia*, the need to strengthen Africa's capacity to participate in all aspects of peacekeeping operations, including the military, police, humanitarian and other civilian components.

The prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa constitute priorities for the European Union and we are committed to working in partnership with Africa to secure peace and democracy, respect for human rights, political stability and economic and social development. We are committed to a proactive policy focusing on preventing the outbreak of violent conflicts at an early stage, as well as on post-conflict peace-building and using the full range of policy instruments available. These goals are set out in the European Union's Common Position on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, agreed in 1997. In this context, the European Union continues its support of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

In May 1998, the European Union adopted the Common Position on Human Rights, Democratic Principles, the Rule of Law and Good Governance in Africa. This Common Position gives a high priority to a positive and constructive approach with a view to supporting efforts of the OAU, subregional groups and individual countries to promote respect for human rights and good governance.

The Union has established a consultative mechanism with the OAU, which we wish to develop further. We will strengthen the dialogue with the OAU and subregional organizations on concrete possibilities for backing their efforts, *inter alia*, in the fields of early warning, preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and awareness of the importance of respect for human rights,

the rule of law, a pluralistic society, democratic institutions and practices and a culture of tolerance.

Over the last 10 years, African countries have initiated a number of reforms aimed at democracy and respect of human rights. However, the mechanisms to solve and manage tensions and differences require strengthening. Conflict prevention and management call for a pluralistic civil society which is based on dialogue and the networking of various interest groups, political systems which are based on cooperation rather than confrontation, as well as the rule of law to protect democratic principles and human rights. The European Union is also willing to further increase its cooperation with the OAU and its member States in these areas.

We welcome the OAU's endorsement, at its summit in Ouagadougou in June 1998, of the EU's proposal to hold, in the first half of the year 2000, a summit of the heads of State and Government of the European Union and of Africa. We are intensively working on the preparation of the summit in order to achieve a successful outcome. The summit will offer a unique opportunity to debate political and economic subjects of common interest at the highest political level.

The Union attaches great importance to the regular contacts and dialogue which it holds with regional and subregional organizations in Africa and we work to enhance our dialogue, *inter alia*, with the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in eastern Africa and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). Cooperation between the European Union and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has continued to progress and a comprehensive dialogue has been established in various areas of cooperation. The third SADC-European Union Ministerial Conference will take place in Vienna in early November. It will review cooperation between the European Union and SADC since 1994 and determine the priorities for future cooperation.

Africa, in particular sub-Saharan Africa, stands at the crossroads. On the one hand, we observe important signs of political and socio-economic progress; on the other, violent conflicts are spreading over parts of the continent, threatening to escalate into open regional warfare. The European Union would like to reiterate its deep concern over the fact that, in spite of important regional and subregional efforts, instability seems to be gaining ground. This apparent downward spiral has to be stopped and we call upon all concerned to do their utmost and to seek peaceful solutions. The European Union strongly believes that closer United Nations-OAU cooperation is a key factor in improving the chances of reaching lasting settlements.

Regarding the Great Lakes region, we give full support to the diplomatic efforts of the United Nations and the OAU, as well as of regional leaders and other personalities concerned, to restore peace to the region and promote national reconciliation. We continue to support the idea of convening an international conference at an appropriate time, under the joint auspices of the United Nations and the OAU and enjoying the support of all the States of the region, in order to address, within a global approach, the root causes of the conflicts in the region. The European Union Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region, Ambassador Aldo Ajello, whose mandate the European Union has just extended until 31 July next year, will continue to work closely with the relevant organizations and personalities.

The Union is deeply concerned about the ongoing crisis in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the threat any escalation of the conflict poses to the region as a whole. We support the principle of the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and its neighbouring countries and we call, in this context, for a cessation of external interference. Governments should use their influence to advance the cause of peace. There can be no military solution to the conflict and we call upon the parties to agree to an immediate ceasefire. We welcome African initiatives to find a peaceful negotiated settlement acceptable to all Congolese. We stand ready to help the political dialogue and to support any negotiation scheme obtaining the consent of all parties involved, *inter alia*, through the assistance of the EU Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region. The Union strongly urges the parties involved in the conflict to respect human rights and humanitarian law and to abstain from acts of indiscriminate violence, especially against civilians, and ethnic propaganda and harassment. We urge the parties to secure safe and unimpeded access for humanitarian assistance.

The European Union is deeply dismayed at the severe deterioration of the political and military situation in Angola, which threatens to reverse the peace process into a full-scale military confrontation. We are convinced that a lasting peace in Angola can be obtained only by full compliance with the Lusaka Protocol, which, together with the "Acordos de Paz" and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council, remain the

fundamental basis for the peace process. UNITA's leadership has to comply immediately and without condition with its obligations under the Lusaka Protocol. It has to give up any military ambition, refrain from rearming, fully demobilize and, finally, transform itself from a military organization into a civilian political party. It has to allow the extension of State administration throughout the whole country. The European Union is taking all measures in order to fully implement the sanctions imposed by the Security Council against UNITA and urges all States to do likewise in order to encourage UNITA to abide by its obligations.

The European Union welcomes and fully supports the efforts of the OAU to bring a negotiated settlement to the border conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and we urge both parties to do their utmost towards a peaceful solution.

The European Union urges the parties in Guinea-Bissau to continue negotiations under the joint Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries (CPLP)/ECOWAS mediation to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. With regard to Sierra Leone, we strongly condemn the reported atrocities committed by rebel forces. We encourage the Government of Sierra Leone to do its utmost to foster peace and the reconciliation process in the country. Regarding the conflict in Somalia, which has taken a terrible toll, especially among civilians, the European Union remains deeply concerned at the Somali leaders' inability to negotiate a peaceful settlement of their disputes.

The time is opportune to focus our attention on the sustainable development of Africa, which remains a major challenge to be met by the African continent. It is encouraging to note that numerous African countries have undertaken sweeping reforms of their economic policies and of the public sector and that, after two decades of decline, we have recently been able to observe signs of economic recovery. Although this globally positive trend may mask substantial disparities amongst African countries and remains fragile to external and internal shocks, it does give reason for optimism.

At the same time, the fight against widespread poverty in Africa remains one of the crucial challenges of our time. In this context, economic growth has to be accelerated and development programmes have to ensure that the poorest groups of the population are their first beneficiaries. Human and social development should be moved to the centre of macroeconomic policy design and implementation.

The European Union remains committed to the fight against poverty and to meeting the target of reducing the proportion of people living in extreme poverty by half by the year 2015. The Union — as the major donor to Africa, contributing two thirds of total official development assistance flows to sub-Saharan Africa, and as the most open market for those countries — is committed to renewing the partnership agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and to transforming the Lomé Convention into an even more modern and efficient framework for cooperation which will remain strong and prominent in the twenty-first century.

Africa bears the primary responsibility for creating an environment where development is sustainable and prosperity is ensured. Each Government has to take good governance seriously, ensuring respect for human rights and the rule of law and strengthening democratization. African countries must do their utmost to live in an environment of good-neighbourly relations.

In conclusion, let me emphasize our great appreciation for the role the OAU has been playing in determining its responsibilities and in defining a common vision of the future of the African continent. We are looking forward to closely cooperating with the OAU, and we encourage the strengthening of its ties with the United Nations so as to bring the expertise and political weight of both organizations together in order to best face the challenges of the next millennium.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): In my capacity as the Chairman of the Group of African States for the month of October 1998, I have the honour to address the General Assembly at its fifty-third session on this agenda item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). Please allow me at the outset to express the appreciation of the group of ambassadors of the OAU at the United Nations for the Secretary-General's excellent report on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The relationship between the United Nations and the OAU is a positive one, in line with provisions of Chapter VIII, Articles 52 to 54, of the Charter of the United Nations, which recognize the relevance and indeed the importance of proximity and the familiarity of regional organizations with the local situation and environment of conflicts or potential conflicts. Accordingly, the Charter encourages consultations between regional organizations

and the United Nations as partners in progress in the mutual search for international peace and security.

Although the Security Council has primary responsibility, for the maintenance of international peace and security, as mandated by the United Nations Charter, the fact is that the OAU has a comparative advantage in assisting with the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts in our continent, Africa. OAU member States are nearer to conflict situations in the continent; they have greater understanding of the causes of African conflicts; and they tend to exhibit more political will to find solutions to the problems faced by the African continent.

Since its inception, the OAU has striven to promote greater understanding and good neighbourliness between and among member States. The organization has also been consistent in its endeavour to prevent conflicts and achieve the peaceful resolution of local conflicts while working closely with the United Nations Security Council. In recent years, much has been done to further improve the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, especially in the political, social, economic, technical and cultural areas, which are also relevant to conflict prevention prospects in Africa.

Conflict prevention holds the key to the maintenance of peace and security in Africa and perhaps elsewhere in the world. However, it remains a big challenge both for regional organizations like the OAU and for the United Nations. That is because without absolute vigilance, the early signs of impending danger could easily escape our notice. It is with such an awareness that the United Nations and the OAU have developed and continue to fine-tune common indicators for early warning and joint training of staff in the field of conflict prevention.

Preventive diplomacy, disarmament as regards small arms and the preventive deployment of troops to areas of simmering tension are all areas being seriously explored and considered in an effort to further reinforce the cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations.

Where conflicts have already degenerated into violence, the OAU, in consultation with the United Nations, steps in to prevent further escalation, using its peacekeeping facilities. This approach is sometimes exercised through the subregional groupings such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The OAU indeed plays a complementary role to the Security Council in the mutual task of maintaining international peace and security. It is therefore imperative that the United Nations subsequently increase logistic and financial support to the OAU and other regional and subregional organizations in order to enable them to become even more effective partners with the United Nations in their joint tasks and objectives. This is the way forward to successfully address the immense obstacles to international peace and security.

In this regard, the United Nations should continue to assist the OAU in strengthening its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution in Africa. Moreover, the United Nations should ensure the effective implementation by Member States as well as by the United Nations system as a whole of the recommendations of the recent report by the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa.

The United Nations Special Committee on Peacekeeping Operations, which is chaired by my country, Nigeria, has been working closely with the African Group as a whole at the United Nations in order to achieve the common goals of the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts. The OAU member States, we must continue to emphasize, send troops, provide force commanders and dutifully pay their assessed contribution for United Nations peacekeeping operations, in spite of their own often very limited financial resources.

The promotion of a culture of peace, tolerance and harmonious relationships within and between States is important to the creation of stability and security in Africa. A committed and dedicated effort to pursue economic development is undoubtedly a prerequisite for peace and stability in Africa. In this regard, we welcome the contributions of the African Development Bank (ADB) and the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) to the work of the OAU/ADB/ECA joint secretariat, and of the United Nations agencies working in Africa which are involved in efforts to help translate into reality the objectives of the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community.

Indeed, the entire United Nations system, as well as the States Members of the United Nations, are urged to extend their support for the operation of the African Economic Community and at the same time to adopt appropriate measures to ensure the effective

implementation of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), in particular with regard to economic reforms. These involve the effective mobilization and efficient utilization of domestic resources, the promotion of the private sector and foreign direct investment, the intensification of the democratic process and the strengthening of civil society, the environment and development, resource flows, the solution of Africa's debt problem, trade facilitation and market access, the diversification of African economies, the improvement of the physical and institutional infrastructures and social and human resource development, and, last but not least, women in development.

Finally, we of the African Group support the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity that will be considered by the General Assembly. We believe that both organizations should increase the frequency of their consultations in order to enable them to maximize the achievement of their joint objectives while avoiding unnecessary duplication of both efforts and resources.

Mr. Ka (Senegal) (interpretation from French): My delegation associates itself with the statement made by Burkina Faso on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and by Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States.

For my delegation, consideration of agenda item 35, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity" is of particular importance, because since 1960 Africa has been at the heart of the concerns of the international community and therefore has been in the forefront of the agenda of the United Nations.

This interest in Africa certainly derives from the geopolitical situation of the continent and from the diversity of political and economic problems confronting the African countries, but also from the huge and so far unexplored potentials which make this continent a zone of opportunity and growth for the future.

Thanks to the courageous joint actions of the African leaders and their peoples, Africa is rediscovering stability, which is reaffirmed and consolidated through the will to focus on prevention and settlement of conflicts and the development of the continent. In these areas, the OAU is playing an ever-growing role, particularly through its Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution and the involvement of regional organizations.

In the economic field, struggling against poverty, providing fundamental social services, dealing with demographic pressure and pursuing the process of regional economic integration have all been part of the efforts to lay the groundwork for sustainable economic growth in Africa.

All these efforts and all of these gains on the march toward the peace and development of Africa have been made possible through the multifaceted cooperation which Africa has with the United Nations in various fields. Today, the entire international community shares the concept that the best way to ensure peace and security for Africa is, without question, the advancement of sustainable development on the continent. Without peace, security and stability, development is merely hollow rhetoric, and without development, peace can only be fragile.

This approach adopted by the United Nations forms the foundation for the new United Nations agenda for the economic social development of Africa for the 1990s. It is at present being implemented in a concerted fashion by the countries of Africa and the operational bodies in the United Nations within the framework of the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative for Africa.

My delegation believes that the status of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the OAU and the League of Arab States and their observer missions to the United Nations should be reconsidered to allow these three organizations to enjoy the privileges and immunities which are essential for the official exercise of their responsibilities. It is my delegation's view that this question should be considered in particular by the Committee on Relations with the Host Country in the light of Article 105 of the Charter and in the light of accepted practice in certain host countries.

In conclusion, the numerous challenges confronting Africa demand time, energy and appropriate comprehensive responses from the United Nations, from its system and from the entire international community. To that end, and through effective cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU substantive progress has been made in the right direction. For this reason my delegation would like to appeal to Member States to support the draft resolution on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Dlamini (Swaziland): My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Cooperation

between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity", contained in document A/53/419.

The Kingdom of Swaziland is grateful to note that efforts are being made to implement the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations concerning regional arrangements, which set forth the basic principles of governing their activities and for establishing the framework for cooperation with the United Nations in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. Evidently, cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) has been enhanced and fruitful over the years since the signing of the agreement in 1965.

As stated in the report, the Secretaries-General of the two organizations have met and consulted in a number of areas. This is a commendable effort on their part, in view of the many problems Africa still faces. These persistent problems vary from economic and social difficulties to a number of conflicts both within and among nation-States.

The involvement of the Department of Political Affairs in the areas of international peace and security is pivotal in contributing to one of the major aspirations of the OAU, which is to ensure the sustainable development of a peaceful Africa. The establishment of a United Nations liaison office with the OAU in Addis Ababa will further strengthen cooperation between the two organizations. My delegation is also encouraged to note that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs has seconded a staff member to the liaison office. For this reason, the OAU will now be better informed of all United Nations actions in the humanitarian field.

Africa's pursuit of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peace-building, including post-conflict peace-building, will be better articulated by the collective efforts of the Central Organ of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the OAU Conflict Prevention Unit and the United Nations through its liaison office.

May I briefly recall that Swaziland supports the revitalization of the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. We believe that the Centre has an important role to play in promoting confidence-building measures at the regional level, thereby encouraging progress in the area of sustainable development. There is a need therefore to provide the necessary resources to enable the newly appointed Director to strengthen the activities and programmes of the Centre.

Furthermore, the Kingdom of Swaziland is appreciative of the efforts and involvement of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, particularly with respect to the Southern African Development Community. The High Commissioner's initiative in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of projects on human rights, democracy and the rule of law will be of benefit to the countries in southern Africa to which a human rights resource person has been assigned.

Cooperation in the field of economic and social development remains pivotal for Africa. The participation of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries in the OAU summit held at Ouagadougou in June 1998 was yet another positive demonstration of commitment to the quest for the economic and social development of African countries. Furthermore, we commend the efforts and involvement of the Economic Commission for Africa, of United Nations funds and programmes and of other agencies. Here I would mention the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environment Programme, the World Food Programme, the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the International Labour Organization, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Intellectual Property Organization, among many others.

Still on the subject of economic and social development, much more effort is still needed to ensure that poverty is alleviated in Africa. To this end, a number of commitments have been made, but unfortunately these efforts have not met with positive results.

The progress report of the Secretary-General, entitled "Mobilization of additional resources for African development: a study on overall resource flows to Africa" and contained in document A/53/390/Add.1, gives a clear and analytical picture of the prevailing situation. It was evident in 1991, when the General Assembly approved the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s that there was a need to mobilize new and additional resources in this area. Seven years later, however, the situation has only become more intense. This greater need calls for even

more urgent action in addressing all the problems besetting Africa.

Poverty in Africa persists, foreign debt is still a major problem, the domestic savings rate has stagnated, official development assistance is on the decline and private capital flows remain small. This is the situation Africa is faced with. Evidently, the situation is unlikely to change for the better in the foreseeable future unless there is renewed political will and commitment from the international community. Africa's growth rates need to be substantially higher than they are at present, and additional resources must therefore be mobilized.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates the importance of retaining this item on the agenda of the General Assembly annually. Recalling previously adopted resolutions, we would like to state that the draft resolution to be submitted to the Assembly at a later date will further enhance cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, and we shall fully support its adoption.

Mr. Hachani (Tunisia) (*interpretation from French*): My country endorses the statements made earlier in the debate by the representative of Burkina Faso on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States. My delegation wishes to address a few additional points on the item entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity". The importance of this item is steadily growing because of the priority the United Nations now gives to Africa and because of the special responsibility of the United Nations towards the African continent.

I should like to underscore my delegation's interest in strengthening cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity. I welcome what has been achieved thus far through that cooperation. I want also to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, for his tireless efforts to assist us in Africa to promote peace, security and development in our continent. The Secretary-General's report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity describes the activities of the United Nations and its agencies in that connection and the progress that has been made.

Mr. Filippi Balestra (San Marino), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The international community's present interest in Africa is in line with the urgent appeals made over the years in many international and regional forums by my country and its President, His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Africa is determined to take charge of its own fate, relying first and foremost on its own capacities and on inter-African solidarity and cooperation. But it needs the support and solidarity of the international community in view of the major challenges it must overcome, including those posed by war, by poverty and by disease. These challenges can be tackled only with resolute international action and in close consultation with the African States and with the Organization of African Unity, which is the proper framework for cooperation with Africa.

We welcome the tradition of consultations that has been established between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the Organization of African Unity, and we hail their initiative to meet twice a year, along with their senior advisers, to discuss priority areas of cooperation and to coordinate their efforts. That initiative and the establishment of a United Nations liaison office with the Organization of African Unity will help strengthen cooperation between the two organizations and ensure coordination in the implementation of the various programmes and activities that relate to Africa. Moreover, the decision of the Security Council to convene ministerial meetings every two years to assess progress in promoting peace and security in Africa reflects the heightened importance the Council attaches to that continent.

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity in the field of the maintenance of peace has yielded encouraging results. Here, building the capacity of the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution is of particular importance in view of the growing number of situations it has been called upon to address since its establishment. While the maintenance of international peace and security is principally the responsibility of the United Nations, regional organizations can — as the experience of the Organization of African Unity demonstrates — contain hotbeds of regional tension and make a significant contribution to the success of United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

Indeed, having achieved such results since its creation only a few years ago, and despite its limited means, the Mechanism deserves to be encouraged. The Mechanism reflects the determination of African States to

make preventive diplomacy a constant feature of the activities of the Organization of African Unity aimed at eliminating foci of tension, restoring peace and security, and bringing reconciliation to the region. In that context, consolidating coordination between the two organizations and supporting the Mechanism by providing it with adequate means will enable the Organization of African Unity to anticipate and prevent conflicts and to act more rapidly to contain crises continent-wide.

The restoration of peace and security in Africa necessarily involves eliminating the root causes of the hotbeds of tension and conflict. The deployment of efforts towards sustainable development in Africa is a prerequisite for the creation of a climate conducive to the establishment of peace, security and stability throughout the continent. The United Nations plays a key role in this context by devising specific programmes in support of the continent's efforts in the area of economic and social development and by mobilizing the required international support, in particular on the part of the wealthier countries. In this regard special attention should be paid to resolving the debt problem of African countries.

In his report, the Secretary-General touched on a number of activities undertaken jointly between the OAU and the specialized agencies of the United Nations in the area of economic and social development. We welcome this cooperation, and we call for a stepping up of efforts to harmonize these activities with those undertaken in the area of the maintenance of peace, in view of the close link between these various topics.

Likewise, we welcome the positive initiative represented by the decision of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to organize, in conjunction with the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, meetings with the leaders of the world's major corporations to heighten their awareness of the progress made in Africa and the new investment opportunities that it offers in key sectors for growth. We hope that this initiative will contribute to mobilizing the funds that Africa needs for its economic and social development.

In his report on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa, the Secretary-General advocated a series of actions in favour of peace, stability and development in Africa. Coordination with the OAU in implementing these activities will heighten their chances of success. Africa has made significant progress towards democracy, the promotion of human rights and economic reform. These advances deserve the support of the international community in the context of respect for the sovereignty of African States.

Mr. Konishi (Japan): The importance of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly in addressing issues of economic development and conflict prevention, cannot be overemphasized. Japan sincerely welcomes the emphasis which the Organization of African Unity (OAU) places on its cooperation with the United Nations in these areas.

The issues of conflict prevention and development in Africa are inextricably related. Thus, in considering conflict prevention and post-conflict economic and social development, it is necessary to return to an analysis of the root causes of the conflicts and to address the situation in Africa by adopting a comprehensive approach that encompasses the political, economic and social fields.

In the recognition that peace and development are closely related, Japan is taking initiatives which it hopes will strengthen the cooperative efforts of the United Nations and regional organizations, particularly the OAU.

First, in January the Government of Japan hosted the Tokyo International Conference on Preventive Strategy to devise a comprehensive strategy for conflict prevention, giving particular attention to the situation in Africa. The report of the Tokyo Conference (A/53/63), recommended measures which the United Nations and regional organizations might take immediately, including those relating to the enhancement of Africa's preventive capacity, especially the early warning capability. At the conference, specific policy proposals related to this area were put forward, including suggestions for the promotion of initiatives by regional organizations, the enhancement of the operational capabilities of regional institutions, and a personnel training programme by regional organizations.

Secondly, just last week, Japan, together with the United Nations and the Global Coalition for Africa, organized the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD II), which was attended by the Secretary-General, a number of heads of State or Government of African countries, and representatives of international organizations. The conference concluded with the adoption of the Tokyo Agenda for Action identifying critical development issues in Africa, articulating the goals and objectives of efforts to address

those issues, and encouraging the international community to cooperate in order to achieve those goals.

Thirdly, as mentioned in the policy address of the Foreign Minister of Japan, Mr. Koumura, during TICAD II, Japan has also been cooperating bilaterally with the OAU. Through our contributions to the OAU Peace Fund, we are helping the organization to strengthen its capacity in conflict prevention and resolution, including establishing the computer network connecting the United Nations, the OAU and other organizations for early warning of conflicts.

I should also add that, as a non-permanent member of the Security Council, Japan has been taking active part in the work of following up the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on Africa, in which the Council adopted a resolution addressing the need for strengthening the coordination between the United Nations and regional organizations.

In closing, I should like on behalf of the Government of Japan, to commend the initiatives and coordinating efforts of the OAU in the area of conflict prevention, peace-building and economic development in Africa. We trust that its evolving cooperative relationship with the United Nations will serve as a model for other regional and subregional organizations as they address the issues of peace and development.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): The Norwegian Government welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

Last year the Secretary-General was requested to report to the General Assembly on how this cooperation has evolved. The report reveals the wide scope of cooperation between the various United Nations institutions and the OAU. We are especially pleased to note the number of concrete steps that have been taken to strengthen this cooperation.

The discussion on the Secretary-General's report on security and development in Africa showed that recent developments in parts of Africa are worrying and may threaten the stability and future prospects of large parts of the continent. Mediation and peacekeeping efforts have been initiated in many cases, and it is crucial that these initiatives are coordinated and mutually supportive. Here the United Nations must play a leading role, in close cooperation with the Organization of African Unity and the subregional organizations.

We fully agree with the view that building closer ties between the United Nations and the OAU to enhance the mutual capacity for preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa is particularly important. The regular meetings between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAU to discuss priority areas of cooperation and coordination are key elements in this process.

Given the present number of conflicts on the African continent, we think that the focus on conflict prevention, early warning and the capabilities of the United Nations and the regional organizations to meet these challenges is particularly important in the dialogue between the United Nations and the OAU. We welcome the decision by the Department of Political Affairs and the office of the Permanent Observer to meet on a regular basis in order to facilitate the coordination of actions and initiatives. Furthermore, the establishment of a United Nations liaison office with the OAU in Addis Ababa is an important step in strengthening cooperation between the two organizations. We will specifically emphasize the role of this office in coordinating the various efforts in preventive diplomacy and peacemaking.

We also commend the report's emphasis on cooperation and coordination between the OAU and the subregional organizations, especially with regard to conflict prevention and regional development. We believe that the regular meetings and coordination mechanisms outlined in the report may be an important step in ensuring better coordination between the United Nations and its agencies and the subregional organizations. The OAU should play a key role in this respect.

Norway has for several years contributed financially to strengthening African capacity in peacekeeping and conflict prevention. The OAU's Mechanism for conflict resolution and the training-for-peace programme in the Southern African Development Community region are two examples in this regard. However, the conflicts we see in Africa today illustrate the need for increased assistance in this field. The Norwegian Government is committed to continuing its effort in cooperation with other partners to further strengthen African capacity in the area of peacekeeping and conflict prevention.

We also welcome the efforts by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs to assist the OAU in implementing programmes intended to strengthen the

capacity of African organizations to meet humanitarian challenges.

The United Nations plays a crucial role in promoting economic and social development in Africa. Given the number of least developed countries on the continent, it is important that all parts of the United Nations system pay particular attention to Africa's development aspirations.

We have taken note of the activities in the economic and social fields conducted by the various organizations. Although we are pleased with the level of activity, we need to emphasize the importance of cooperation and coordination both at Headquarters and at the country level.

There can be no economic development without human development. An integral part of human development is respect for all human rights: civil, cultural, economic, political and social. We therefore welcome the project being implemented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that aims to strengthen Africa's regional mechanism for the promotion and protection of human rights.

The OAU has an important role to play in promoting peace and development in Africa. The call by Secretary-General Salim Salim for increased support by the United Nations to the OAU and the subregional organizations should be given the consideration and the follow-up it deserves.

Mr. Rubadiri (Malawi): I would like to begin by associating myself with the statement delivered by the representative of Burkina Faso, who spoke on behalf of the Chairman of the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

My delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, contained in document A/53/419, which provides a detailed outline of the various areas of collaboration between the United Nations and the OAU.

Malawi is pleased to note that since the adoption by the Assembly almost a year ago of resolution 52/20, cooperation between the two organizations has steadily expanded and strengthened. Continued cooperation in matters of peace and security, as well as in the field of economic and social development, deserves the importance that is being accorded to it. That peace and development are mutually reinforcing aspects of life is an undeniable fact of which the international community has long been aware.

Conflict, both intra-State and inter-State, is one of the major factors that has reversed hard-won economic gains in a number of African countries. Meagre national resources are being diverted towards buttressing defence and security forces. In some instances, conflict has destroyed a country's infrastructure, rendering the national development effort a waste. We therefore welcome the emphasis that has been placed on collaboration in the prevention and resolution of conflicts in Africa.

Malawi believes in the primacy of the strategy of early warning and conflict prevention, and that conflict resolution should be a second-best option. The regular consultations and exchanges of information taking place between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAU are an important development. In addition, the United Nations Department of Political Affairs, as overseer of the programme of cooperation, deserves to be provided with ample resources and support in order to fulfil its mandate.

The general lack of resources prevalent among African States has led to much of the continent's being ill prepared to deal with natural disaster and emergency situations. My Government therefore attaches considerable importance to the work being carried out by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in strengthening capacities for African organizations as well as building national capacities for disaster and emergency management.

Equally notable work is being undertaken by other agencies of the United Nations system in building the national capacities of African States in the field of human rights and good governance. In southern Africa we have welcomed the regional human rights resource person assigned by the High Commissioner for Human Rights to work voluntarily with Governments of the region. As a country that is involved in an irreversible process of consolidating and strengthening institutions of participatory democracy and the protection of human rights, among other aspects of good governance, Malawi appreciates the support of the United Nations system working in collaboration with the OAU.

In the economic and social field the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and a number of other

agencies have pooled their efforts in a partnership for development with African organizations as well as with individual Governments. Programmes relating to food security, control and eventual eradication of disease, education and revolutionizing information flow are some of the areas that are likely to form the basis of an economic take-off for the African continent.

While my delegation welcomes the existing arrangements for cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU, as outlined in the Secretary-General's report, we hope that the trend will continually be strengthened over time. The short-term marginalization of the continent, resulting from the process of globalization and growing interdependence, should not serve to undermine the existing partnership.

But how can one end without asking the question, who are all the OAU now? Perhaps Norway has just managed to give us part of the answer, and Austria may also have tried to do so. For sooner or later, as we enter the next century, the "O" may drop from the OAU — meaning the "Organization" part of it — and, like Europe's dropping the word "Community", Africa will become an "African Union". It is this aspect which concerns us, because it involves a number of young people.

Through its conflicts and displacements of human beings, especially women and children, Africa has been scattered around the world. I am thinking of a number of young men and women who are now scattered around the world, either by wars at home — by conflicts — or by having been born abroad of people separated from Africa by conflict.

I could give a personal example of this. My own family is scattered around the world. I have two sons who are married in Botswana, three girls who are married in Uganda, one son who is married in Kenya and another son who is married in El Segundo, California. All these sons and daughters are the future of Africa. Just as Norway said there could be no progress without human resources, this might be another dimension in which the OAU or Africa can now work hand in hand not only with the United Nations, but also with those countries which think the same as we do: that all those who have received knowledge and learned skills in countries which now have also become part of themselves, but not so much a part of Africa, can come back home and use those skills and that knowledge. Perhaps all those who have constituted a brain drain from Africa because of its conflicts and have benefited as academics and as professionals in other countries, can be given a chance to come back to Africa and practise those skills.

How can this be done? The United Nations can now begin to play a role by asking those who have spoken here not only come to vote for Africa but also to come up with tremendous statements. This I would also call part of our moment of seeking this United Nations connection with Africa.

For its part, Malawi is ready to work even more closely with both the United Nations system and regional organizations of the OAU.

Mr. Muchetwa (Zimbabwe): I am making this statement on behalf of my Ambassador.

My delegation welcomes this opportunity to deliberate on the question of cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). We associate ourselves fully with the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Burkina Faso and the Permanent Representative of Nigeria, who spoke on behalf of the Group of African States. I wish to thank United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his informative report contained in document A/53/419, which is before the Assembly.

My delegation is pleased to note that, since their meeting in Harare on 3 June 1997, the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the OAU, together with their advisers, have continued their consultations in meetings both in New York and at OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa. We also welcome and encourage the organization of annual meetings between the secretariats of the two organizations, such as the recent one held in Addis Ababa from 6 to 8 May 1998, to review the implementation of existing programmes of cooperation and to agree on new ones, as well as on follow-up action.

Zimbabwe follows with keen interest the programmes of cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations and arrangements, in particular the biannual meetings between the Secretary-General of the United Nations and the heads of regional organizations and arrangements. We are pleased to note that the agenda of the last such meeting, which was held in New York on 28 and 29 July 1998, centred on cooperation for conflict prevention, focusing on the challenges of early warning and conflict prevention, the capabilities of the United Nations and regional

organizations to meet those challenges and practical modalities for collaborative interaction between them.

The importance which Africa attaches to this issue cannot be overemphasized. We therefore wish to reiterate our appeal to the United Nations and, through it, to the international community to extend, in concrete terms, assistance to the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. International support for Africa's efforts, including in the area of capacity-building, is needed for Africa's institutions and mechanisms to play their roles effectively in support of the United Nations peacekeeping activities in Africa.

In this regard, we welcome the establishment in April this year of the United Nations liaison office with the OAU in Addis Ababa to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations. We also note with appreciation the training assistance given by the United Nations Development Programme to OAU officers in the Conflict Management Division. It is our hope that the international community can build upon these initial, but crucial, steps.

Although Africa's economic and social crisis has been the subject of various initiatives, the continent's economic and social woes have remained unmitigated. Africa's sacrificial commitment, at the national level, to economic reform and restructuring programmes has largely gone uncomplemented by the requisite international support. Furthermore, Africa's endeavours to launch the African Economic Community and to revitalize the subregional groupings, which are the building blocks and pillars of that Community, continue to be hampered by an unfavourable international environment.

We in Africa believe in a United Nations which has matters of economic and social development at the very core of its agenda. We believe that the United Nations is uniquely placed to outline policy guidelines, mobilize and advocate for resources and coordinate the various efforts for economic and social development and well-being.

In this regard, we appreciate the analytical work done by the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries to find ways and means of harmonizing the various initiatives on African development. We also welcome the work plan adopted by the joint secretariat of the OAU, the Economic Commission for Africa and the African Development Bank on major activities to be carried out for the launching of the African Economic Community up to the year 2000.

We wish to challenge the international community to give priority, not only to the formulation of development initiatives on Africa, but also and even more to their operationalization and implementation. We strongly believe that the peace and security that we so ardently seek to achieve cannot be attained in the conditions of abject poverty that are prevalent in Africa today. We are convinced beyond any measure of doubt that a politically stable and economically prosperous and vibrant Africa is best placed to contribute to greater global peace and security.

Mr. Mohammed (Ethiopia): At the outset, permit me to thank the Secretary-General for his report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU). This report, in conjunction with the report on the causes of conflict in Africa, is further testimony to the importance and priority that the Secretary-General continues to give to the situation in Africa in general, and to cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU in particular.

Since our deliberation last year on the agenda item on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity, important developments have taken place in Africa. Some of these developments were, indeed, positive and encouraging. However, the overall situation in the continent, especially in the areas of peace and security, has remained precarious and even worsened in some instances. This state of affairs has, in turn, highlighted further the need for enhanced cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

The report of the Secretary-General provides valuable information on the measures taken with a view to enhancing cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the OAU. We welcome these steps. The institutionalization of regular consultation mechanisms between the two secretariats and the follow-up procedures put in place to coordinate the efforts of the two organizations are, indeed, commendable.

Needless to say, cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations in the maintenance of peace and security is essential and in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter of the United Nations. In this regard, we note with satisfaction the actions taken by the United Nations over the past year, including the establishment of a United Nations Liaison Office with the OAU. The Office is expected to operate under a clear mandate and terms of reference that will enable it to play

the role assigned to it, especially in facilitating the exchange of information and in serving as a means of effective communication and interaction between the two organizations.

Furthermore, the activities of the various United Nations offices and agencies, such as the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and others, should be closely coordinated with that of the OAU. Such cooperation and coordination should aim at strengthening Africa's capacity and mechanisms, in particular through the mobilization and provision of the necessary financial and technical assistance to enhance OAU's institutional capacity.

As rightly pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report on the causes of conflict in Africa, United Nations support for regional peace initiatives is indispensable. In this connection, we wish to commend once again the Secretary-General and his staff for their continued efforts to closely coordinate the activities of the United Nations with those of the OAU and other regional organizations in the search for peace in the various conflict areas in Africa. In our own subregion, we are particularly pleased to note that the United Nations and its various agencies and programmes are working closely with our subregional organization, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), in support of our efforts and initiatives, especially on the situations in Somalia and the Sudan. It is our earnest hope that such cooperation and support will be further strengthened and enhanced.

Ethiopia, as a country mandated by the OAU and IGAD to assist in the search for peace in Somalia, attaches great importance to the role and support of the United Nations in bringing about a lasting solution to the crisis in Somalia. Our experience over the past few years has clearly shown that coordination of the efforts of all external actors and the need to avoid the proliferation of initiatives are essential factors for the success of the efforts for peace in Somalia. In this respect, the second international consultative conference on Somalia, held in Addis Ababa on 20 October 1998, has been particularly useful to the efforts to establish a mechanism for the coordination of all efforts for peace in Somalia. We are confident that the United Nations will remain engaged in the search for peace in Somalia and continue to assist the efforts of the OAU and IGAD.

In the economic and social fields, we note with satisfaction the important role that the various United Nations agencies and programmes, and most particularly the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), continue to play in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity. In this regard, we welcome the adoption of a work plan by the joint secretariat of the ECA, the OAU and the African Development Bank (ADB) on major activities to be carried out for launching the operation of the African Economic Community up to 2000.

Likewise, my delegation commends the important contributions that other United Nations agencies and programmes, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the World Food Programme (WFP), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), among others, continue to make in cooperation with the Organization of African Unity. The efforts and activities of the United Nations system should focus, first and foremost, on priority areas, as well as on capacity-building and long-term development in Africa. The momentum for enhanced cooperation between the United Nations and OAU needs to be maintained in order to implement the political and economic agenda identified by African countries. At the same time, we wish to extend our appreciation to those United Nations agencies and programmes, such as the United Nations Development Programme, that have already taken steps to focus their activities on institutional capacity-building and the promotion of economic cooperation and integration in Africa.

The past few years have clearly shown that cooperation and coordination between regional organizations and the United Nations have become indispensable instruments in addressing vital issues in the areas of peace and security, as well as in economic and social development.

We have witnessed the increasing resort to regional mechanisms and arrangements to prevent and resolve regional conflicts in different parts of the world. While this trend is indeed welcome, it should be made clear, however, that the role of regional organizations and arrangements cannot be a substitute for the primary role and responsibility of the United Nations, in particular that of the Security Council, in the maintenance of international peace and security. The United Nations

system in general, and the Security Council in particular, should remain actively engaged and be able to fulfil their respective mandates and responsibilities.

In conclusion, I wish to state that Ethiopia, as a host country of the OAU and the ECA, which is the regional arm of the United Nations, is committed to contributing its part in the efforts to further strengthen and enhance the cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Lee See-young (Republic of Korea): My delegation wishes to express its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on the agenda item under consideration, which underlines the importance of close cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU).

During this decade, Africa has made great strides towards stability, democracy and prosperity. However, armed conflicts persist in some parts of the continent, threatening regional peace and security. These conflicts are inflicting enormous suffering on innocent civilians by causing massive dislocations of people, humanitarian distress and serious violations of human rights. Furthermore, they are destroying the very resources that are essential for social and economic development. To meet these challenges, the international community has so far applied a vast amount of energy and resources, through the United Nations system and the other humanitarian organizations, often in cooperation with regional and subregional organizations.

We believe, however, that further efforts should be made to enhance cooperation and coordination between the United Nations, the Organization of African Unity and subregional organizations. We are encouraged by the increasing cooperation between the Security Council and the OAU Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution, the recent success of the United Nations-Economic Community of West African States joint undertaking in regional peacekeeping and the closer consultations and exchange of information between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of the OAU and their advisers.

In our view, such cooperation enables the United Nations to draw on the local expertise and resources of regional organizations. The United Nations and regional organizations should also concentrate more on crisis prevention. As we know, it is always less costly to prevent crises than to react to them. In this vein, we welcome the establishment of the Trust Fund for Preventive Action of the Secretary-General, and I take this opportunity to express my Government's willingness to continue to contribute to it. We hope that this Fund will be further expanded through increased contributions so as to enable the Secretary-General to take preventive action in areas of potential conflict, including in Africa.

The international community also needs to continue helping regional organizations strengthen their capacity for peacekeeping. Capacity-building is important because it not only enables a swifter response to conflict, but also ultimately empowers African countries to resolve regional problems by themselves. In this regard, we welcome Security Council resolution 1197 (1998) of September 1998, which provides for ways and means to improve continued cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU. We support the early implementation of these steps.

Since the 1970s, the Government of the Republic of Korea has always given high priority to the promotion of cooperative relations with African countries. More recently, we have participated in a number of United Nations peacekeeping operations in Africa, including the second United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II), the third United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) and the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). Our attachment to the peace and prosperity of Africa became even stronger during our recent two-year involvement as a member of the Security Council.

We also stress that close cooperation in the field of economic and social development is fundamental for long-term peace and prosperity in Africa. The Republic of Korea will continue to focus its development cooperation policy on Africa through increased provision of human resources, through development programmes and through grants in the framework of official development assistance. In this connection, my Government has taken the initiative to organize, in cooperation with the United Nations, the Forum on Asia-Africa Cooperation in Export Promotion, to take place from 14-16 December this year. We expect that Forum to contribute to the facilitation of private sector development in Africa and the promotion of Asia-Africa interregional cooperation.

If we are to fulfil our responsibility for international peace and security, we should give higher priority to the African continent. The Republic of Korea reaffirms its

determination to continue to make a positive contribution in this process.

Mr. Yacoubou (Benin) (*interpretation from French*): We have recently witnessed an unleashing of the forces of nature in the form of hurricanes, bringing with them material damage and a great loss of human life. We are living in an interdependent world in which a phenomenon at one end of the earth rapidly gives rise to upheavals and repercussions at the other. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to convey its profound sympathy to the States and peoples affected by these phenomena, the terrible works of nature.

Bearing in mind such events, I take the floor to speak about agenda item 34, on cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity (OAU), which is the subject of the report of the Secretary-General in document A/53/419. The report provides an account of the efforts undertaken in the context of cooperation between the two organizations since the last session of the General Assembly. These include the creation within the OAU in Addis Ababa of a United Nations liaison office for preventive action, peacemaking and peace-building and the democratization process in Africa; the institutionalization of biannual meetings in New York and Addis Ababa for exchanging ideas and information between the two organizations; regular meetings between the OAU and various entities of the United Nations system to evaluate the implementation of ongoing programmes of cooperation and to prepare new ones; and meetings with the Group of African States in New York to brief them on priority issues.

We should add to that list the provision by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights of advisory services and technical assistance to the Governments of African countries, to the OAU and to the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights in promoting and protecting human rights.

The framework strategy with three components developed by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights is a significant instrument, and we should ensure that it is implemented methodically and efficiently.

The promotion and protection of human rights is, in my delegation's view, a key element in preventing conflicts and building peace in Africa, for, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Benin stated in the general debate,

> "there is no more urgent task today than replacing the culture of violence and war...by the culture of peace. We believe that the foremost duty...continues to be the promotion of peace and all its values and the behaviour that underpins and strengthens it." (*A/53/PV.20*)

The report before us indicates that in realizing this aim, within the United Nations system it is the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) that has the responsibility for mobilizing the necessary resources. I should like to urge UNDP to spare no effort in carrying out this task, which is an essential prerequisite for attaining the strategy's targets. I should also like to appeal to donor countries to contribute to the realization of this project by making contributions of all kinds of resources.

My delegation commends the initiative of dispatching to southern Africa a regional human rights specialist who, in coordination with the resident representatives of UNDP in the subregion, is responsible for assisting in the elaboration, execution and evaluation of projects in the areas of human rights, democracy and the rule of law. In view of the importance of the issue, Benin takes the view that the sending to other subregions of Africa of human rights specialists would considerably contribute to the promotion of the values of peace.

The quest for peace in Africa requires a comprehensive, concerted and resolute approach that addresses the promotion of democracy and respect for human rights as well as economic and social development. In this regard, my delegation welcomes the work of the Development Assistance Committee, which has led to the identification of five priority areas: an increase in official development assistance; the conversion of the bilateral debts of the poorest African countries; liberalization of access to the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative; the simplification of conditions for African products' access markets in industrialized countries; and an increase in private direct investment in Africa.

Various other initiatives have been launched to assist Africa, as an expression of our shared desire to see the continent emerge from its marginalization. In order to achieve their purposes, not only must these initiatives be harmonized, in keeping with the pertinent recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on Africa, but partial targets must be set, to be

achieved step by step and sector by sector, and regular evaluations of implementation must be scheduled.

Furthermore, my delegation takes the view that, in keeping with the results of the second Tokyo International Conference on African Development, which took place last week, the improvement of the situation in Africa through effective conflict management, peacemaking and peace-building and the elimination of poverty remains primarily the responsibility of the continent. However, the assistance of the international community and of the development partners is of the greatest importance.

I continue to believe that, as in the past, Africa will do its part.

Lastly, my delegation congratulates the Secretary-General on his efforts in managing the affairs of the Organization and associates itself with the statements of Burkina Faso and Nigeria made on behalf of the OAU and the African Group.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 2011 (XX) of 11 October 1965, I now call on the Observer for the Organization of African Unity.

Mr. Kébé (Organization of African Unity) *(interpretation from French):* Allow me first of all to extend to the President, on behalf of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), my warmest and most heartfelt congratulations on his accession to the presidency of the Assembly.

It is a humbling honour to speak from this rostrum of the cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations. It is indeed a formidable honour, especially since I follow the representative of the current Chairman of the OAU and the Chairman of the African Group in addressing the Assembly. They have referred, with relevance and clarity, to the major themes of the cooperation between the United Nations and the OAU and have emphasized the focal points and areas of priority and have proposed new ideas. I fully associate myself with all their comments.

Therefore, and without denying the highly instructive value of repetition, I wish to assure the Assembly that, insofar as possible, I shall restrict my comments to areas which I consider to be of imperative necessity, with the understanding that all the areas of cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations are essential.

I shall begin by welcoming that cooperation — which I would describe as outstanding from all points of view — by thanking the United Nations Secretary-General for his continuous efforts to raise cooperation between our two institutions to an ever higher level and by congratulating him on the complete and precise report which is the subject of our debate.

The road we have come down together since the creation of this cooperation in 1965 is a long one, and our accomplishments are highly significant. But since perfection always lies out of reach, we need to be responsive to changing times and new events as we set about our joint task.

The fundamental changes experienced by the world today, as well as the multiplicity and complexity of the serious problems experienced by Africa, require a strengthening of the existing framework of cooperation and the identification of new approaches.

As for strengthening the already existing framework, we should point out the periodic high-level meetings between the Secretaries-General of the two Organizations during the summits of the OAU and the sessions of the General Assembly. These periodic meetings are complemented by ad hoc meetings whenever circumstances require or allow for them. At these meetings, the philosophy of cooperation is reaffirmed, principal themes are clarified, major orientations are redefined and guidelines are redrawn.

I wish also to mention the annual meetings of the two secretariats, held alternately at New York and at Addis Ababa, at which programmes for cooperation are finalized and adopted. But we see that, in practice, unforeseen difficulties always arise between the adoption of a programme and its implementation; the political will of leaders, however often reaffirmed, is insufficient to resolve these. That is why the two secretariats decided at their last meeting, held in May 1998 at Addis Ababa, to convene a follow-up and review session every six months. I wish here to hail the recent decision by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to open a liaison office with the OAU at Addis Ababa; this will fill a gap that hampered the effective follow-up of decisions that had been taken.

Among the areas of cooperation that I would qualify as being of the greatest urgency is that of conflict prevention, which since 1993 the OAU has made the highest of its priorities with the creation of the

Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution. Because it has a presence throughout Africa, notably through its specialized agencies, the United Nations unquestionably has a great advantage with respect to gathering information that it can share with the OAU, which can then be ready to act in a timely manner in areas of potential conflict. The OAU, however, knows that information is merely a tool, but a tool that is indispensable in the timely political decision-making that alone can prevent conflicts.

Then there is the maintenance of peace. We would all agree that here the regional organizations must be allowed to play a pivotal role in conflict situations. Indeed, satisfactory solutions to some African conflicts can be — and, as we have seen, have been — found through regional initiatives. Others, however, are so complex that they require United Nations involvement because they demand vast human, material and financial resources. Fortunately, wherever such events occur in Africa, the OAU and the United Nations have stood side by side and have harmonized their efforts and pooled their means to find solutions to the problems.

Another area in which cooperation between the OAU and the United Nations can only benefit African States is support for the process of democratization, the institutionalization of good governance, respect for human rights, and the establishment of a culture of peace. Here, African leaders have made significant efforts, which deserve the joint support of our two institutions.

I should also mention post-conflict situations, in which a climate that has been made healthy is needed for any action aimed at genuine reconciliation. The OAU has unambiguously demonstrated its determination to fight impunity, by establishing the International Panel of Eminent Personalities to investigate the 1994 genocide in Rwanda.

Finally, there is the social and humanitarian sphere where, as a result of actual or latent conflicts in Africa, the existence of a growing number of refugees and displaced or repatriated persons requires more intense cooperation and better coordination between the two organizations. Let me here congratulate the Secretary-General of the United Nations on his report on protection for humanitarian assistance to refugees and others in conflict situations, document S/1998/883 of 22 September 1998, which relates to the protection of refugees and of those engaged in delivering assistance.

In the economic sphere, there is no need to recall that Africa remains concerned with the search for permanent solutions to problems of economic growth and development. In recent years, the African countries have shown their concern through individual and joint efforts, in particular by undertaking radical economic reforms and continent-wide programmes such as the Lagos Plan of Action, which remains relevant 17 years later, the African Economic Community, established in 1991, and the 1995 Cairo Agenda for Action: Relaunching Africa's Socio-economic Development.

Parallel to these endogenous efforts, the international community has shown great interest in the campaign against poverty and in promoting economic growth and development in Africa. Here we hail the numerous initiatives of the international community in this sphere, nearly all of them conceived in this Assembly. I mention in particular the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s (UN-NADAF), its predecessor the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development, the United Nations System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, and the Tokyo International Conference on African Development, now in its second stage.

Yet everyone knows that these efforts have not yet yielded the results on which many African countries had counted. It is increasingly feared that the improvements gained through years of economic reforms and social constraints of all kinds will be swept away by the ongoing process of globalization. The African countries have made an effort to create and consolidate a climate conducive to development. They have clearly defined their share of the responsibility and have shouldered it as best they could. It is the response of the international community that is overdue in meeting the hopes of Africa.

The phenomenon of globalization is transforming the world into a global village — not a term of my own invention — characterized by interconnected networks, communications, knowledge and cultures, and by the interdependence of economies. Any weakness or shortcoming in one link in the chain will have an impact on all the other links: here I need only recall the crisis in Asia.

To my mind, the principle of solidarity needs to be reinvented on the global scale with a view to finding lasting solutions to the problems of Africa's foreign

indebtedness — which in spite of all the generous and praiseworthy initiatives, remains a thorny and painful issue; resolving the matter of increasing the flow of new and additional resources and of foreign direct investment; and finding a way to strengthen the competitive capacities of African countries to enable them to benefit from agreements concluded in the framework of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations.

The idea of a world that operates on two levels and at two speeds, as is the case now, is morally unacceptable and humanly untenable. The present state of the world seems to be ahead of human thinking. We need to reinvent, for human beings of the coming millennium, a "global village" mentality. There is nothing pejorative in this term. Only in this way can the disasters that bloodied the first half of the century and the continuing tensions that have left their mark on its second half be avoided in future.

The United Nations and the OAU are fully aware of the extent of these new challenges, and I am pleased to note here that they are together working to prepare people and institutions for the good life in the "village" of the twenty-first century.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that a draft resolution on this item will be submitted to the Secretariat at a later date.

Agenda item 23

Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community

Report of the Secretary-General (A/53/275 and Add.1)

Draft resolution (A/53/L.15)

The Acting President: I give the floor to the representative of Guyana to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.15.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): I have the honour to introduce draft resolution A/53/L.15, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community", on behalf of the 14 member States of that Community — Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and my own country, Guyana. We are pleased and privileged to have the co-sponsorship of the States named on the document, as well as of the following countries, which have since asked to join the list: Algeria, Bahrain, Belgium, Chile, Colombia, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Japan, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America.

At the outset, I should like to thank the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/53/275 of 18 August 1998 and A/53/275/Add.1 of 16 September 1998. Outlined in the report is the wide range of activities in which the United Nations and the Caribbean Community are currently engaged as part of their ever-growing cooperation. Caribbean Community (CARICOM) States consider the relationship between these two institutions to be very beneficial to their own development and would consequently wish to see it strengthened and expanded.

Although CARICOM was granted observer status only in 1994, the countries which are members of this Community of nations have had a long and fruitful relationship with the United Nations. Many of our States in fact owe their freedom and independence in good measure to the decolonization campaign undertaken within the Organization in the aftermath of the Second World War. Today, almost six decades later, Caribbean States continue to rely on the provisions of the Charter for the protection of our hard-won sovereignty and territorial integrity. For us, as small States in a very uncertain world, the United Nations represents a shield and buckler against threats to our peace and security.

Equally important, the United Nations has been very instrumental over the years in assisting our economic and social development so that we might hope, in the words of the Charter, to live "in larger freedom". Its vast network of functional agencies, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), to name just a few, have helped considerably to improve the quality of life for our peoples. We would therefore wish to fully recognize and express our appreciation for the role which the entire system, and in particular the Department of Economic

and Social Affairs, has played — and continues to play — in promoting our welfare.

Given this established tradition of close cooperation, it is not surprising that our Community would wish to enhance its relations with the United Nations. In keeping with this desire, CARICOM formalized its observer status in 1996 and has since established a presence at Headquarters in New York. Increasingly, the two organizations have interacted through an exchange of information and periodic consultations. On occasion, their respective Secretaries-General meet to review and build upon their cooperation. By all accounts, the experience has been a very positive and rewarding one for all concerned.

Accordingly, the draft resolution that has been submitted for consideration this year seeks to reflect the achievements over the past two years and to promote even greater cooperation between the two bodies in the future. Reference is thus made in the preambular paragraphs to the First General Meeting, which was held on 27 and 28 May 1997 here at the United Nations between representatives of the Caribbean Community and its associated institutions on the one hand, and the United Nations system on the other. That meeting served to affirm the need to strengthen the cooperation between the two organizations in the areas of economic and social development and political and humanitarian affairs.

On that basis, the two parties have explored and delineated the areas in which future collaboration could take place.

In its operative portion the draft resolution welcomes the convening by the Secretary-General of the Third Meeting between the United Nations and Regional Organizations on 28 and 29 July 1998, with a follow-up planned for later this year. CARICOM's participation in this consultative process demonstrates, in our view, the fact that under the provisions of Chapter VIII of the Charter, every regional arrangement, no matter how small, can contribute to reinforcing international peace and security through the practice of preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping and peace-building. In practical terms, CARICOM countries have come together with the United Nations and the Organization of American States to restore and support democratic government in our sister State of Haiti and, more generally, to buttress the democratic process throughout the region.

In the area of economic and social development, the United Nations has been a major catalyst for developmental activities in the Caribbean. With the assistance of friendly Governments such as Italy we have been able to undertake necessary programmes in the fields of energy and training to enhance the capability of public administration throughout the region. Cooperating with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee and other regional institutions, CARICOM and the United Nations are working actively to ensure the full implementation of Agenda 21 and, in particular, the Barbados Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States.

Specifically, the draft resolution urges the specialized agencies and other organizations and programmes of the United Nations to cooperate with the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and CARICOM to initiate, maintain and increase exchanges and projects with the Caribbean Community and its associated institutions. Of particular importance and interest to us as member States are the issues of sustainable development, drug-trafficking, environmental protection, education and training, national disaster preparedness and, generally, the strengthening of our weak and fragile economies to deal with the challenges arising from the phenomenon of globalization and from the rapid liberalization of the world economy. The continuing cooperation between the United Nations and CARICOM should therefore be aimed at sensitizing the international community to the particular vulnerability of the small economies of the Caribbean and of the world to the vagaries of world trade and to the constant cycles of natural disasters. The donors' meeting scheduled for February next year offers a welcome opportunity to support the Programme for the Small Island Developing States.

In sum, the draft resolution before us is no more than an indication to the cooperating parties — namely the United Nations and CARICOM — as to how they may best be able to build on their existing relationship. The member States of the Caribbean Community sincerely hope that not only will the draft resolution be unanimously adopted, by consensus, but also that its implementation will receive the positive and practical support of the entire United Nations system.

The year ahead will be a very crucial one to the future of the countries of the Caribbean. We will need to take stock of what we have been able to do — and equally important, of what we have not been able to do — in terms of promoting the Agenda for Development. Therefore, when the United Nations and

CARICOM hold their second meeting in February 1999, we will look to see how the two institutions can further coordinate and maximize their efforts to assist us as member Governments in placing our peoples on the path of solid political, economic and social progress.

Mr. Manz (Austria): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia — and the associated country Cyprus, as well as the European Free Trade Association country member of the European Economic Area, Norway, align themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) took note with great interest of the Secretary-General's report on the cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM). We welcome the intensified cooperation and interaction between CARICOM and the United Nations in a wide range of areas, including political matters, sustainable development, environmental protection, drug control, education and science, economy, trade and integration, international law and, last but not least, media and information.

Increased exchange of information between the United Nations system and CARICOM took place in particular with respect to conflict prevention, governance, democracy and civil society issues, and poverty eradication. Joint efforts continued to promote environmental protection and enhance disaster response, management and preparedness. Coordination and cooperation in the context of the 1996 Barbados Plan of Action concerning drug control have been further strengthened. The EU expresses its appreciation of these developments.

This year CARICOM celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary. The EU congratulates the Community on its achievements in the process of regional integration, which the EU since 1992 has actively supported, as we consider it a very important component of our cooperation with Caribbean States. In the last few years, we have not only noted a stronger Caribbean voice in international forums but also progress in the joint promotion of exports and growth in the attraction of investments through the Caribbean Development Bank.

Furthermore, the EU welcomes the progress in the implementation of the CARICOM single market and economy, and the further development of CARICOM's regional negotiating machinery, as reaffirmed by the CARICOM heads of Government at their nineteenth meeting, held in Saint Lucia this past summer.

The EU would also like to mention positively the development of closer relations within CARICOM with the Republic of Haiti and between CARICOM and the Dominican Republic as well as with Cuba as a member of the Association of Caribbean States.

In February 1997, CARIFORUM and the European Commission signed the Caribbean Regional Indicative Program under the Second Financial Protocol of Lomé IV, providing further substantial resources for regional projects in the Caribbean. In addition, considerable means were made available to assist in financing a wide range of projects in support of the 1996 Barbados Plan of Action concerning drug control cooperation and coordination. The EU continues to be the largest provider of grant aid to the region.

Because the Lomé agreement expires in 2000, the EU and its partners in CARICOM have started to consider the elements of new cooperation agreements. In a post-Lomé process, support for regional integration initiatives and for strengthening the capacities of regional organizations will remain one of the EU's priorities. In economic terms, diversification, economies of scale and better conditions for competition are factors that may promote economic growth and development.

We recognize that in reacting to new economic challenges small island developing States may face specific problems, caused by a shortage of suitable infrastructure, small domestic markets and geographical remoteness from neighbours and international markets, which constitute constraints on economic growth. Small island developing States are particularly exposed to external economic shocks and face marginalization in an increasingly globalized world economy. They are also particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of global climate change and thus need assistance in adapting to such changes. The apparent growing strength and frequency of tropical storms, such as the recent hurricane Georges, and the consequences of El Niño phenomena have resulted not only in massive loss of human life, but also in significant damage to ecological and economic resources and human settlements in the past decade. In recognizing this specific situation, in 1994 in Barbados the international community endorsed a programme of action for the sustainable development of such States. We are looking forward to the full appraisal of the

implementation of this programme in 1999, culminating in a special session of the General Assembly.

The EU reaffirms its commitment to continue providing financial and technical assistance in support of CARICOM's own efforts to cope with the various challenges. On top of bilateral contributions, within the framework of the Lomé Convention, the European Community has allocated over one billion ECU in aid for the period 1996-2000 to island developing States in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

The European Union is committed to further developing and strengthening its relationship with the countries of the Caribbean. In the years to come, we will work together on a new partnership, through qualitative progress in political dialogue, economic relations and cooperation. In this connection, we will continue to attach particular importance to the Caribbean Community and its ever closer links and interaction with the United Nations.

The members of the European Union have therefore sponsored the draft resolution before us, which we hope will be adopted by consensus.

Ms. Aguiar (Dominican Republic) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I am honoured to make this statement as Chairperson of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States for the month of October.

The history of the Caribbean region has been characterized by survival through resistance to various forms of adversity and by willingness to face difficult situations. For this reason, the commonly held perception of the Caribbean region as a theatre of operations where nations struggle to conquer territories and to open markets, but also as a region where the terrible forces of nature make themselves felt with tenacious and methodical regularity — all this has become part of our history as well.

The world events of the last 20 years have been very meaningful for the Caribbean's prospects of cooperation and development. These events have also brought about fundamental changes in the areas of politics, economics and trade relations and in international organizations themselves. Our Latin American and Caribbean region, as part of the world community, has felt the influence of those events and has adjusted the ways in which its internal and external relations are organized to the circumstances that prevail in this new age.

These are more than sufficient reasons for our Latin American and Caribbean region to welcome and support draft resolution A/53/L.15, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community". The Latin American and Caribbean region understands that instructions from the General Assembly such as those in resolution A/51/16 of 11 November 1996 contribute to greater exchanges of information, cooperation and technical assistance between the international community of nations and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

One of the shared priorities of the Caribbean region is that of striving to consolidate national measures to face and develop a new future defined by a process of economic growth on a sustainable basis that guarantees an improvement in the quality of life and the preservation of natural resources, especially those of the Caribbean Sea, *mare nostrum*.

The United Nations Secretary-General's report (A/53/275) of 18 August 1998, gives us an account of the significant Cooperation Agreement signed between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and of CARICOM, on the occasion of the First General Meeting between Representatives of CARICOM and of the United Nations system, which took place here at United Nations Headquarters on 27 and 28 May 1997. This kind of agreement makes it clear that there can be new spheres of cooperation, which we believe should be explored and developed more systematically and extensively.

Thanks to the signing of these agreements, it has been possible to develop an exchange of cooperation and technical assistance between the United Nations and the countries of CARICOM, despite the existing limitations in terms of financial and human resources.

In this regard, allow me to highlight some of these cooperation exchange programmes. First of all, cooperation between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and CARICOM stresses the eradication of poverty by assisting the Governments of the Caribbean region in their endeavours to implement national plans, strategies and policies in the area of poverty eradication. Furthermore, bearing in mind that the region is prone to natural disasters, UNDP, in collaboration with the Organization of American States and other organizations, continues to support the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency. In addition, UNDP has commissioned studies on the subject of good governance and development, intended to

stimulate debate and foster dialogue on the broad range of questions relating to good governance from a Caribbean perspective.

There was also a formal arrangement for assistance and support from the United Nations Environment Programme to the CARICOM secretariat for the preparation and convening of the Caribbean Sea Forum, held in Trinidad and Tobago from 2 to 6 June 1998 as part of the celebration of the Year of the Ocean.

There has been stepped-up cooperation between the United Nations International Drug Control Programme and CARICOM, with a view to securing regional coordination in the area of drug control. CARICOM's active participation in the Second Regional Meeting on Drug Control Coordination and Cooperation in the Caribbean, held in Santo Domingo on 8 and 9 December 1997, is an example of the exchange of joint regional cooperation to which I referred earlier.

Lastly, we wish to mention the cooperation of the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women in the form of studies presented as papers during the twenty-second meeting of the Standing Committee of Caribbean Statisticians, held in Saint Lucia from 4 to 7 November 1997, on measuring unwaged work for possible inclusion in Caribbean national accounts.

As we have seen, the relations of cooperation between the United Nations and CARICOM have been changing, political and economically. The Caribbean region is mindful of the need to make use of the innovative capacity of its internal structures to bring about changes that will take the Caribbean region along a new path of economic progress and prosperity, thus enabling it to guarantee reliable democracy for its countries.

But the Caribbean cannot do this alone. That is why, in my capacity as Chairperson of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States, I take this opportunity to invite Member States to adopt by consensus draft resolution A/53/L.15, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community".

Miss Durant (Jamaica): My delegation wishes first of all to associate itself with the statement delivered earlier by the Permanent Representative of Guyana, on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community, on agenda item 23, "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

Jamaica is particularly pleased that, since this item was last considered by the General Assembly at its fifty-first session, the relationship between CARICOM and the United Nations — a relationship on which CARICOM States place great store — has been further formalized.

We welcome the signing of the cooperation agreement between the Secretaries-General of the United Nations and the Caribbean Community in May 1997 and hope that it will result in more structured collaboration between the two organizations. We share the view of the United Nations Secretary-General that this important event has ushered in a new era of partnership, one which we expect will be more productive and more meaningful.

Jamaica therefore welcomes the report of the Secretary-General, contained in document A/53/275 and Addendum 1, which gives a comprehensive account of the many activities undertaken over the past two years and also points to areas in which continued collaboration would be most fruitful. We note with satisfaction the wide range of United Nations bodies engaged in cooperative activity with CARICOM and fully endorse the programmes of work being pursued.

I wish to highlight some of the programmes mentioned in the report, to which Jamaica attaches particular importance.

CARICOM-United Nations collaboration on the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) has been particularly useful. Apart from the technical assistance provided to member States at the national level, the United Nations Development Programme has undertaken a range of projects at the subregional level, working alongside Caribbean institutions like the University of the West Indies Centre for Environment and Development and the Caribbean Conservation Association. The directory of experts on small island developing States and the small island developing States information network, established within the Regional Caribbean Capacity 21 Programme, are among the more valuable projects. The establishment of the Small Island Developing States Network (SIDSNET) has already enhanced communications among island communities worldwide about issues relating to sustainable development.

The Port of Spain Office of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) also continues to make a significant

contribution by sharing with CARICOM the responsibilities of the interim secretariat for the implementation of the small island developing States Programme of Action in our subregion. Worthy of special recognition is the technical support which ECLAC gave to the Caribbean Ministerial Meeting on the Programme of Action for the SIDS follow-up, held in Barbados in November 1997. Jamaica, with the rest of CARICOM, looks forward to continued support for the Barbados Programme of Action as well as for the follow-up of other global conferences.

I also wish to mention the importance my delegation attaches to collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, in particular its Regional Seas Programme, and with the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (HABITAT), as well as with other organizations in the area of disaster preparedness and natural disaster reduction.

Cooperation between the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and CARICOM on regional drug-control initiatives is another area of meaningful cooperation. UNDCP was an important actor in the preparation of the Barbados Plan of Action for drug control coordination and cooperation in the Caribbean. The Caribbean Drug Control Coordination Mechanism has pursued a very active programme with CARICOM institutions and member Governments and Jamaica wishes to express its sincere appreciation for the substantial support for national and regional anti-narcotic initiatives which we continue to receive through such cooperation.

Another important area of CARICOM-United Nations cooperation is the assistance provided for the establishment of the CARICOM single market and economy. In addition to the design of the legal framework and facilitation of the consultative process, technical assistance for the strengthening of the technical negotiating capacity of the member States has been very useful. Jamaica looks forward to continued support in this area as the countries of the Caribbean pursue deeper subregional integration and prepare to participate in wider regional integration processes.

Looking to the future, an important area on which CARICOM has placed great emphasis for the achievement of sustainable development is that of capacity-building. We therefore hope that the United Nations project on assistance to public administration systems at the central and local governmental levels will result in greater efficiency and effectiveness in the public sectors throughout the Caribbean.

The heads of Government of the Caribbean Community, at their 18th Conference held in Montego Bay in 1997, resolved to ensure through our education systems the nurturing of the development of each person's potential without regard to gender; the development of a culture of entrepreneurship; research and development as a way of life and as a means of improving production; and improvement of the competitiveness of those industries on which our economies are based. This commitment is central to our strategy for the development of creative and productive citizens of the twenty-first century.

We recall that Secretary-General Kofi Annan, addressing the University of the West Indies in Kingston, Jamaica, in April 1998, stressed that

> "education not only enriches a culture; it is the first condition for freedom, democracy, and sustainable development".

We in the Caribbean look to the United Nations to support our aspirations in this regard.

Jamaica expresses its satisfaction with the progress of cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community. We have therefore joined in cosponsoring draft resolution A/53/L.15 and commend it to this Assembly for adoption by consensus.

Mr. Cho (Republic of Korea): My delegation would like to extend its appreciation to the Secretary-General for his comprehensive report on cooperation between the United Nations and the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), as contained in document A/53/275 and Addendum 1.

We note with satisfaction that, over the last two years, a wide range of activities has been undertaken to strengthen cooperation between CARICOM and various arms of the United Nations system, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). Moreover, we appreciate that the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat, the focal point for cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, is maintaining a list of United

Nations focal points, facilitating a more pragmatic and cost-effective cooperation with CARICOM.

During the two years under review, one of the most remarkable developments was the signing of a cooperation agreement between the two organizations during the First General Meeting between Representatives of CARICOM and its Associated Institutions and of the United Nations system, held in May 1997. We welcome this development, as it lays a solid foundation for further enhancing the cooperation already existing between the two organizations, and it signals a diversification in cooperation in various fields, such as peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

In this connection, my delegation hopes that the Second General Meeting between CARICOM and the United Nations system will be held in 1999 in the Caribbean region in order to assess progress in the implementation of the agreed areas and to discuss additional measures to intensify cooperation between the two organizations.

As we learn lessons from our history, peace and stability turn out to be essential elements for sustainable development. Therefore, my delegation welcomes the efforts of the Secretary-General for greater interaction and cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, including CARICOM, in the field of conflict prevention. We hope that these efforts will continue to be promoted and expanded through follow-up meetings between the United Nations Secretariat and the secretariats of the regional organizations in the area of early warning and conflict prevention.

As we approach the twenty-first century, the world finds itself moving towards becoming a single global village. Although the geographical distance is great between the Republic of Korea and the Caribbean region, cooperative relations have been forged and expanded between the two. We have paid significant attention to the interests of small island countries, and the Caribbean countries in particular, in their strenuous endeavours for economic, social and political development.

It is in this context that the Republic of Korea has been making consistent efforts to strengthen its bilateral ties with the countries in the Caribbean region through the promotion of trade, investment and greater exchanges, including technical assistance. We have also actively participated in the international community's efforts to strengthen the democratic process and the protection of human rights in the region, particularly through participation in the UNDP trust fund for a police programme in Haiti. Despite the daunting task of overcoming the current financial crisis, the Republic of Korea will continue to make active contributions to the efforts of the CARICOM countries in promoting peace and prosperity by sharing our own experience in democratic and economic development.

The twenty-first century will see a more interdependent world as a result of the rapid development of technology and globalization. Regional integration and cooperation will be pervasive, transcending the borders of States. In this context, we believe that cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations, such as CARICOM, should be further strengthened and intensified in the coming years.

In line with the objectives of the United Nations, these two bodies can bring their vast experience and expertise to the task of fostering peace and security, sustainable development and friendly relations among States in the region through cooperation and coordination of their strengths. For our part, the Republic of Korea, which has a long-standing friendship with many CARICOM countries, will continue to support CARICOM's efforts to that end.

In conclusion, the Republic of Korea, as a sponsor, strongly supports draft resolution A/53/L.15, and we hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

The Acting President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/8 of 16 October 1991, I call on the Observer for the Caribbean Community.

Mr. Marville (Caribbean Community): I wish, on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), to express thanks to the United Nations agencies and to those countries which assisted the countries of the region most severely struck by the passage of hurricane Georges. Their assistance was deeply appreciated and once again confirmed to us in the region their degree of friendship and the place which our small area of Caribbean States holds in the international community. At the same time, I wish to express our concern and hope that those countries affected by the passage of hurricane Mitch will enjoy a similar level of support, thus enabling them to adjust rapidly following that onslaught.

I also wish to state how deeply distressed the Community has been over the seemingly mindless

atrocities being carried out in Kosovo. The Community will continue to monitor the situation there and support the international community in its efforts to bring peace to that area. The most recent news from Kosovo, fortunately, offers us a ray of hope.

At the same time, the Community wishes to express its confidence that the agreement recently entered into between Israel and the Palestinians will remain a binding instrument. In the Caribbean Community we have always attempted, both as separate States and as a region, to contribute to world peace and stability in support of and in collaboration with the United Nations.

Two years ago, a similar resolution to that which is now being considered was adopted in this forum. The Caribbean Community welcomed the support given to that resolution then, as it now looks forward to support for today's draft resolution.

Our Community States place great reliance on multilateral systems and rules. We expect those rules to take into consideration the various levels of development in the sovereign States which comprise the international community. In no international race does the amateur seriously compete with the professional; in no international competition does the lightweight compete with the heavyweight. Differences are recognized and concessions provided. When, therefore, representatives of countries speak of a level playing field, we ought to be certain that the playing field is indeed level.

The Caribbean Community thus calls on the members of the international community once again to recognize the critical need for the small, vulnerable States of the Caribbean to be able to continue to benefit unfettered from the provisions of the European Union banana regime. Our European partners have made every effort to be compliant with the World Trade Organization, yet new challenges threaten. The Caribbean Community calls particularly on its special friends in this international community, whichever continent they are from, to support it on this issue.

Another issue of concern to the Caribbean Community, one for which it is attracting a fair amount of support from United Nations agencies and States and groups of States of the Organization, is the issue of the illicit trafficking in drugs and small weaponry. The Caribbean Community remains pleased at the level of cooperation and support it is receiving in this area, but at the same time it calls for greater efforts to be made in programmes for drug demand reduction.

As a community devoted to having the Caribbean Sea internationally recognized as a special area in the context of sustainable development, the Community also looks forward to the support of the United Nations and the international community in developing this concept and having it adopted at a future meeting of the General Assembly.

A number of critical issues facing CARICOM, and their resolution, may in many ways amount to a redefining of the Community itself and of the way it conducts its affairs. These include the CARICOM initiative to help bring about a resolution to the post-December electoral political crisis in Guyana. This process, which is continuing and which continues to benefit from the resources of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has marked a new development by CARICOM as it continues to support democracy in the hemisphere and to promote conflict prevention. Similar assistance was also provided by UNDP to Saint Kitts and Nevis as the nationals of that country pondered issues related to the secession of Nevis from the federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis.

These issues, the menace of drug trafficking and other examples of problems of this sort in the region, suggest that the region cannot, and must not, be complacent on the issue of democracy, but must actively seek to strengthen the democratic procedures which for many years have made us proud. The Charter of Civil Society of the Caribbean Community, which has been adopted Community-wide, provides the normative moorings for the Governments and governed of the Community. The Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians needs to be strengthened to allow for much more cross-territory discourse on issues affecting our region, including the democratic process.

In July 1997, heads of Government of the Caribbean Community agreed to accept the application by the Republic of Haiti for membership in the Caribbean Community. While remaining concerned over the political impasse which continues to exist in that country over the election of a Prime Minister, the Community continues to meet with Haiti, at a technical level, to work out the terms and conditions of Haiti's membership. The expanded Community will continue to require the assistance of the United Nations and the Member States in pursuing its developmental activities.

Important among these is the establishment of a Caribbean single market and economy. Work is continuing apace to ensure that the single market becomes a reality on 1 January 1999. Four of the nine protocols to allow for this substantial transformation of the Caribbean Community have been signed and have provisionally entered into force. Once again we wish particularly to thank UNDP for the level of assistance rendered in this critical process. It is internally intended to achieve economies of scale by creating a single economic space, rather than having several small economies. The single market will not promote a closed market but instead a market well suited to investment and trade.

In order to benefit from the opportunities which will be derived from this, the Community will be looking to the United Nations and countries of the international community to promote the development of its human resources, particularly in fields which will allow it to be more competitive in the new world economic environment.

In this context, the Community looks forward to its participation in the 1999 small island developing States review conference. We have already advanced our preparatory process, and we eagerly await the discussions which will take place at that meeting.

Our Community faces many challenges at this time. Through experience we know that we can count on the United Nations and its specialized agencies for support in meeting and benefiting from these challenges.

In supporting the draft resolution, the Caribbean Community pledges to continue in its support, particularly in the regional context, for the aims and objectives of the United Nations.

The Acting President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/53/L.15.

I should like to announce that since the introduction of the draft resolution, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia has become a sponsor.

I call on the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Mustafa (Chief, General Assembly Servicing Branch): I should like to inform the General Assembly that should the Assembly adopt draft resolution A/53/L.15, there will be no programme budget implications.

The Acting President: May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/53/L.15?

Draft resolution A/53/L.15 was adopted (resolution 53/17).

The Acting President: May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 23?

It was so decided.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.